

## Summary Notes

# Washington State Association of County Engineers Western District Meeting

April 22, 2004  
Heathman Lodge  
Vancouver, Washington

### Members, Affiliates and County Representatives Present:

Name	County/Organization	
Esco Bell	Pacific County	(Western District President)
Joe Rutan	Whatcom County	(Western District Secretary)
Pete Capell	Clark	
Randy Casteel	Kitsap	
Stephanie Tax	WSDOT H&LP	
Jim Ellison	Pierce	
Jerry Hauth	Mason	
Bill Pierce	WSDOT H&LP	
Al King	CRAB	
Jeff Monsen	Whatcom	
Walt Olson	CRAB	
Larry Pearson	CRAB	
Dale Rancour	Thurston	
Kent Cash	Cowlitz	
Steve Gorchester	TIB	
Thomas Ballard	Pierce	
Ed Conyers	WSDOT H&LP	
Steve Thomsen	Snohomish	
Scott Merriman	WSAC	

**NOTE:** Attendance list compiled from WSAC Conference registration list and audio recording of the meeting. Due to poor audio quality introductions could not be heard

The following is a brief summary of the topics and discussion covered during the day. Please contact me (Joe Rutan) by email at [jrutan@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:jrutan@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you would like additional information:

## WSACE Western District Business Meeting & Agency Reports

### 1. Crab Report – Walt Olsen

The Spring CRAB Board meeting will be held April 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>. Annual Certifications will be reviewed and Certification of Good Practice issued at that time. Currently only 9 of the 39 counties have submitted Annual Certifications that meet all requirements. Many of the issues raised in the review of the Annual Certifications are related to reporting deadlines, annual program amendments and carry-over projects from previous years. Walt intends to lead a discussion with the CRAB Board regarding the possibility of delaying the April 1<sup>st</sup> reporting deadline by one month to help alleviate problems counties are having meeting this date. Although Annual Certification may not be perfect, the CRAB Board will be reviewing them for “substantial compliance”. All counties are requested (“directed”) to pay close attention to reporting deadlines.

There is currently a CRAB Board vacancy for a County Engineer representing a population of over 125,000.

Thomas Ballard has been reassigned as Deputy Public Works Director for Pierce County. Paulette Norman has been assigned as the King County Engineer. Okanogan County Engineer, Rob McGaughey, has been called up for military service, Reid Wheeler is acting Okanogan County Engineer.

### 2. Maintenance Management System (MMS) – Larry Pearson

Larry has meet with every county and has provided them with a guideline for implementing a Standard of Good Practice for the management of maintenance operations. The CRAB will be developing this Standard of Good Practice related to MMS for implementation by December 31, 2007. They will take this draft to the CRAB Board for review this spring and summer. A report will be provided to counties for review by the fall of 2004. This new Standard of Good Practice should be available by spring of 2005. Currently 9 counties have formal MMS's that appear to meet the requirements of this proposed new standard.

### 3. Highway & Local Program (H&LP) Report – Stephanie Tax

Ed Conyers, New Northwest Region Local Programs Engineer, introduced.

H&LP Biannual Report, Spring 2004 distributed (see attached)

Federal 2004 earmarks recently released (see attached H&LP Biannual Report, pgs 3-5). These funds have been earmarked but money “not yet here”. In order to meet schedules H&LP has developed a new policy to allow for Advanced Construction, this means that H&LP recommends you show the full earmarked amount shown in the press release in your STIP’s and TIP’s. Knowing full well that you will not receive the entire amount due to the “take down” H&LP currently does not know what that take down will be. If you want to advance construction of your project you currently will be authorized at only 90% of the earmarked total. Once the take down is converted you will receive the entire amount due to you. This will allow you to advertise, bid, award and begin construction this spring or early summer “on your own dime” knowing that you will be reimbursed once funds are available late summer.

Toll credits for local agency bridges discussed. (See attached H&LP Biannual Report, pg 6) Bridges authorized through TEA-21 will be funded at 100% up to 10 million dollars. Above that amount it will be funded at 80% with a 20% match.

### 4. Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Report – Steve Gorchester

TIB Update handout distributed (see attached)

Four main topics:

1. **Money** - Last year 74 million dollars in new projects awarded, of which 24% was to county road projects. New grant cycle will begin in June. Steve has concerns this will be a lean cycle due to increased gas prices lowering usage and therefore available gas tax in addition to past over programming in TIB which is still being paid for. As a result, instead of approximately 80 million dollars being available, it will be closer to 65 million dollars. This will cause a downsizing in TIB and the elimination of one project engineer position. Applications will be due in August 2004; award will occur in November 2004, funds will be available July 1, 2005.
2. **Training** – Workshop schedule is published in distributed report (see attached). These are important workshops for your grant writers. These workshops will begin in June. TIB project management training is also now

available. Westside training was April 19 & 20, eastside was April 21 & 22. Over 300 people signed up for this training. Due to its success and obvious need it will be offered again in the near future.

3. **Open County Engr. Position on Board** – Position has been vacated by Tom Ballard who has been promoted to Deputy Public Works Director for Pierce County. Applications will be reviewed at Boards May retreat.
4. **New Streets Program** – This program allows for small city paving projects to include their work into WSDOT or county paving projects. TIB will match up city and county projects and will pay costs to incorporate the two projects together. Bob Moorehead is program manager for the New Streets Program.

Next TIB Board meeting will be in Chelan at end of May.

#### 5. WSACE Presidents Report – Jerry Hauth

Memorandum of Understanding with Association of City Engineers was signed at recent APWA conference. In addition a Memorandum of Agreement was signed concerning four topics that our two associations will pursue together. These topics are:

- 1- Sustainable, dedicated transportation funding
- 2- Change in federal dollars for state money on federally funded projects
- 3- Involvement with the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP)
- 4- Regulatory requirements that are based in sustainable, repeatable science that is understandable.

Working groups will be formed to produce position papers on these topics. Please be aware that you may be asked to be involved in the production of these position papers. Between the cities and counties we represent over three hundred political entities. If we speak in unison we are a powerful voice that will be difficult to ignore.

Jerry recently attended safety subcommittee meeting of the WTP and was very disturbed at the direction of the group. The attendees of the meeting were not interested in engineering solutions to safety issues such as improving clear zones, providing shoulders, or other solutions related to road design standards. The attendees focused on issues such as park and ride lot surveillance, expansion of park and rides, education of drunks so that they can utilize cross-walks more effectively, and non-motorized multi-modal facility improvements. Jerry is extremely concerned that the group is going to report to the legislature that the 275 million that is to be earmarked for safety issues should be directed towards these types of non-traditional, abstract, innovative but untried technology solutions at the expense of dealing with

substandard design issues on rural two lane roads. Jerry encourages you to work with your RTPO, MPO, or even at the state level, and be involved with the WTP to get our message heard and understood that these safety monies are most effective in resolving known structural deficiencies that we are all dealing with in our counties.

#### PRESENTATION – “Rural Road Safety” – Scott Sawyer, Entranco

A copy of Mr. Sawyer’s entire presentation is attached and well worth your time to open and review. The following is synopsis of the presentation.

#### **“Money is coming! Are we prepared to spend it wisely?”**

There is a growing awareness of the importance and magnitude of rural 2-lane safety in America. We as transportation designers need to be aware of this challenge. It is important to better understand how safety plays a role in geometric design. As public funds are invested with greater and greater scrutiny, we need to learn ways to quantitatively evaluate the merits of safety improvements.

According to the General Accounting Office (GAO), the rural fatality rate is 2.5 times greater than the urban rate after adjustment for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). To best address this rising challenge, we must first understand what safety means in the geometric design of roadways. Does higher design speed equate to safety, or does it just lead to faster speeds and more severe accidents? Designers need to know how safety criteria are developed and make better considerations when considering deviations. The public is demanding more from us than just one-size-fits-all solutions.

By focusing on the factors that affect substantive safety the most (traffic volumes, driver behavior, speed and geometry), designers can use available models and/or Accident Modification Factors (AMF) to predict accident rates when analyzing alternatives. Among other things, designers can now model the safety benefits of widening within a horizontal curve, flattening a vertical curve, increasing lane or shoulder widths, creating roadside clear zones, converting from a 4-way intersection to a 3-way intersection, or adding left turn pockets.

Those agencies that integrate these tools and approaches into effective safety management systems will not only be in a superior position to secure safety funding, but they will also spend it wisely.

PRESENTATION – Traffic Safety Information Systems – A Perspective From Abroad  
Jim Ellison, Pierce County Traffic Engineer

A copy of Mr. Ellison's entire presentation titled "March2004Nace2.ppt" is attached. Check out the photos! The following are some of the key points.

In October of 2003 Jim was a member of an AASHTO –FHWA Joint Scan Team that traveled to the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and two states in Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. The transportation agencies in these locations impressed the Scan with:

- Safety as a core business function
- Stated, published and advertised highway safety goals
- Innovative data collection, estimation and dissemination
- Data-for-data partnerships
- Communication and marketing

It is clear there are many things we can learn from our colleagues around the world. The attached presentation is worth your time to open and read

PRESENTATION – Fiber Reinforces Polymer Bridge Decks –  
Matt Sams, Martin Marietta Composites

Fiber-reinforced polymer composite materials are manufactured from complex glass or carbon fiber fabrics and polymer resins using a process called pultrusion. The fabrics are folded and formed to the desired structural shape, drawn through the liquid polymer resins, and finally drawn under heat and pressure through a heated die. This produces a FRP composite structure with a continuous cross section, which can then be cut to the desired length. The pultruded component shapes are then assembled with adhesives to construct components. These structures have a high strength-to-weight ratio and are corrosion resistant, making them ideal for many transportation and construction applications.

This is a new and emerging technology that potentially has some valuable applications. The historically significant Chief Joseph Dam Bridge has recently been the recipient of a Fiber-reinforced polymer bridge deck as well as a bridge in Douglas County. Contact information for Mr. Sams at Martin Marietta Composites as well as in depth information on this innovative product can be found at [www.martinmarietta.com](http://www.martinmarietta.com).

The above web site is recommended reading for those of you with the need to install a new bridge deck that requires:

- A Lightweight Deck (need to increase live-load, movable deck, etc.)
- Fast Installation (inability to close bridge for extended period)
- Certain aesthetic considerations (Historically or community significant)

bridge)

Round Table Discussion, Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Joe Rutan, Whatcom County, inquired if any counties are currently doing biannual budgets. Pete Capell, responded that Clark County is. Walt Olsen mentioned there are some CRAB reporting issues that are being worked out but felt that they could be solved, especially since the legislature itself does bi-annual budgeting.
- Tim Eyman's latest initiative discussed. There was agreement that the initiative to reduce property taxes could have the potential for devastating impacts to general funds and capital programs. CRAB has heard "bits and pieces" from legislators and other government officials. WSAC has a voter education effort underway, information will soon be distributed for July, 2004 training opportunities to engage citizens on the "what if's" of the initiative and help them understand the impacts to essential services. Everyone is requested to pay close attention to this issue.
- Al King of CRAB raised day labor issues. Al stated that many counties are "pushing the limit" on day labor issues and that the CRAB is "pushing back". Al express a concern that counties may lose the ability to perform day labor and asks everyone to be cautious and think about the potential impacts of your decisions and actions related to day labor operations. In short, learn the rules and follow them.
- Al King spoke about how he has been impressed with Boeing and G.E.'s format of their stock reports and is putting together a similar style packet for the County Road Report. This report will tell the story of what we do managing the largest chunk of infrastructure in the state. Al will be looking for information/photos/success stories/etc. for inclusion. This report has a great potential as a template for individual county reports. CRAB staff made a clear statement that the advocacy aspect of this information must be left to the WSACE.
- Scott Merriman, WSAC, gave a brief overview of legislative issues. He stated he expected no supplemental budget and no RTED this session.

Scott then addressed the WTP. He stated, "They need help" with MPO's, RTPO's and advised everyone to engage at that level.

Transportation Efficiency Permit Accountability Committee (TEPAC) was then discussed. Issues included getting 5-year programmatic permits from the State Department of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Scott requested the engagement of counties in this process by responding to his requests

when you received them.

- Jerry Hauth, Mason County & WSACE President, re-emphasized the necessity to engage your MPO or RTPPO regarding the WTP. "Do not assume they are aware your needs and/or concerns. Get your views heard!"

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